

## Aberystwyth University

### *The Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group*

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## **The Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group: the first forty-five years**

### **Background**

The last century and a quarter has seen huge developments in the academic study of the printed and manuscript book and other forms of textual and documentary transmission, largely as a result of those interested in these subjects coming together to form societies with invited speakers. The first such society in the world was formed at Edinburgh in 1890 followed, soon afterwards, by The Bibliographical Society in London (1892). Similar societies were established in the USA in 1904 and Canada in 1946. In the United Kingdom local groups of bibliographical scholars and bibliophiles were established at Glasgow (1905), Oxford (1922) and Cambridge (1949). A Welsh Bibliographical Society was inaugurated at Caernarvon in 1906 and held annual meetings at different locations in Wales and also Birkenhead and Liverpool. It also published an annual journal from 1910 which continued to be published until 1983/4. Likewise Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru - National Library of Wales (NLW) had a strong bibliographical tradition dating back to its foundation in 1907, and published both Welsh and English language articles of bibliographical interest in their Journal from its inception in 1939.

The nineteen sixties saw renewed interest in this field, by which time the original objectives of such societies 'to promote and encourage study and research in historical, analytical, descriptive and textual bibliography,' had grown beyond printed books to include the making and use of manuscripts, cartography, printed music, newspaper and periodical publishing, illustration techniques, bookbinding styles and techniques, the history of libraries, book collecting, the history of reading and provenance studies. Several local bibliographical groups and societies were established at this time, notably at Manchester (1963), Birmingham and the Midlands (1963), and Liverpool (1970). There were also specialist societies such as the Printing Historical Society or 'The History of the Book Trade in the North' research group (both of which were established in 1965). Elsewhere in the English speaking world the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand was founded in Melbourne in 1969.

The 1960s also saw the arrival of a generation of Anglophone bibliophiles in Aberystwyth following the establishment of the College of Librarianship Wales/ Coleg Llyfrgellwyr Cymru (CLW) in 1964 and its remarkable growth over the next five years. These newcomers were anxious to share their own knowledge and enthusiasms whilst learning more of their adopted literary culture. Thus, in the autumn of 1970, an informal discussion was held at the National Library concerning the possibility of forming a bibliographical group in Aberystwyth involving interested staff from the three relevant institutions in the town. The idea came from Eiluned Rees and Gwyn Walters, two assistant keepers at NLW, and two lecturers at CLW: Dorothy Harrop and James Dearden. They realised that there were others likely to be interested at University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (UCW), now Aberystwyth University, and also at the nearby St David's College, Lampeter (soon after to become St David's University College). Arthur Johnston, the distinguished Gregynog Professor of English at UCW, was therefore approached to ask whether he would be willing to act as chairman of an open meeting to discuss such a proposal.

This meeting was held in the Lecture Theatre at CLW on 14 December 1970, when it was resolved to form the Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group with the object of fostering 'a scholarly interest in printed books, books in manuscript, and maps,' and that such interest was 'to extend from a close technical study to the wider aspects of the history of printing and

publishing, the compilation and dissemination of manuscripts, the history of libraries, and other related topics.' The membership was to be open 'to any person interested in the aims and proceedings of the group,' for an annual subscription of one pound. A preliminary meeting of the new society was planned for the following spring which would include of a paper by a guest speaker followed by a business meeting at which a new constitution would be adopted and officers appointed.

### **The first decade**

The first paper presented to the Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group on 17 March 1971 was by John David Fleeman, Fellow and Librarian of Pembroke College, Oxford, who was an expert and bibliographer of Samuel Johnson. He spoke on 'The roles of bibliography and textual criticism in editorial work.' Afterwards, the officers of the new group were formally appointed with Arthur Johnson as the chairman, Gwyn Walters secretary; and James Dearden treasurer. There were also three committee members, although the committee was given power to co-opt not more than two further members for special purposes if it desired to do so. An attractive programme of the five talks planned for the academic year 1971-72 was then circulated, designed by Huw Ceiriog Jones using wood engravings from the Gregynog Press in NLW. These programmes have been produced ever since and have been collectors' items by those interested in printed ephemera.

That first season included two further visiting speakers: Christopher J. Hunt of the John Rylands Library, who spoke on 'The book trade in N.E. England c. 1800: towards a dictionary of printers and booksellers,' and the cartographer and map historian John Brian Harley of Exeter University on 'Aspects of the 18th century London map trade.' However, due to the remoteness of Aberystwyth and the limited funds available for travel and subsistence, the early committee members were often forced to rely on their own friends and former colleagues as speakers and to offer them accommodation in their own homes. Throughout its existence the society has also been able to benefit from the expertise of its own members. Thus the first Annual General Meeting in May 1972 was accompanied by a paper presented by 'James Dearden on '19th century colour printing and publishers' bindings.'

The second session (1972-73) included papers from Julian Roberts, Secretary of the Bibliographical Society in London, who spoke on 'The life and death of cheap 18th century fiction,' and Mary Pollard of Trinity College Dublin who gave a light-hearted account of anomalies brought to light by their new bibliographical cataloguing rules which accompanied the more serious business of the AGM. Papers presented by locals that year included Arthur Johnston of UCW on 'The printing of an Elizabethan quarto,' and two further distinguished speakers from NLW - Bertie George Charles 'The manuscripts of George Owen of Henllys,' and Huw Owen, 'Archives in Libraries.'

For the first few years of its existence the society followed a similar pattern with a mixture of invited speakers and their own members, combining serious contributions to the field of bibliography, accounts of local collections and resources, and occasionally some lighter fare to entertain the membership. The subject of bibliography was always taken to its widest limits including papers by the mathematician D. S. Meyler on 'Some Babylonian tablets on Pythagoras's theorem,' or J.J.G. Alexander, 'Methods of work of mediaeval illuminators.' Not all the papers were historical in content. Glanville Price of UCW spoke of 'Editing *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*,' in 1976 and Richard Storey on 'The development

of the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick Library,' in 1977. H. Rees asked the question 'Do scientists always tell the truth?' and Glyn Tegai Hughes spoke on 'Book-collectors in fiction,' (both in 1978). Martin Ware described 'The perils of medical editing, by an ex-editor of the *British Medical Journal*,' in 1979 and the following April there was an open forum to discuss the perennial issue of 'The future of the printed book,' at which Tony Thompson, E.D. Jones and Warwick Brown each gave a preliminary presentation.

The St David's University College, Lampeter contingent had also begun to make their mark in 1974 with Brian James talking about the rare books collections at the college and Peter Davison (also then Editor of *The Library*) on 'Editing journals.' The founding members were all required to 'do their bit,' with Eiluned Rees speaking of 'The Bookbinder in 18th century Wales,' in January 1976, and Gwyn Walters on 'Antiquarianism in 18th century books,' in 1978. New arrivals in Aberystwyth might also find themselves pressed into giving a paper as a way of encouraging them to join the group. Thus on 4 March 1975, Lionel Madden, then a lecturer at CLW spoke about 'Documenting nineteenth century periodicals: the impossible pursuit.'

The group did not only exist to hear papers and so various other activities were organised for the membership during the seventies, although the absence of surviving documentation sometimes makes it difficult to pinpoint exactly when they began. From the outset members were invited to join the invited speakers at a dinner afterwards, to discuss their papers. The group began to hold an annual summer excursion to visit notable collections, private presses, or other book related venues. Unfortunately the excursion for 1976 did not take place due to the last-minute cancellation of Portmeirion Antiquarian Book Fair, but there was a successful visit to Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul in 1977. Plans were also then afoot for a future Weekend Symposium on book collecting to be held in Gregynog. This took place 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1978 and included both excellent speakers and attracted a good number of participants from outside the membership.

During the first decade close relations were maintained between the Aberystwyth Group of the Liverpool Bibliographical Society which was also founded in 1970. Both Gwyn Walters and Eiluned Rees gave papers to this society and in May 1977 Michael Perkin of that group gave a talk on 'Abraham Cowley and some thoughts on author bibliographies.' The following month members of the Aberystwyth Group hosted a visit to the town by members of the Liverpool society, when it held a second members' exhibition on 'the Art of the Book'. By the end of 1977 membership of the Aberystwyth Group stood at fifty-six and a fairly healthy bank balance of £353.54, had been built up largely as result of receipts from a book auction of unwanted titles donated by members.

Denis Grogan ~~took~~ had taken over from Arthur Johnson as the Chairman of the Group in 1974 and in 1978 Glanville Price, but the first major blow came with the sudden and unexpected death of James Dearden, the Treasurer and a founding member. He died of a heart attack, aged 45, on 16 August 1976. Douglas Ball from CLW took over the role for the next five years. Dearden's death also acted as a catalyst for further changes among the office holders, and so in 1977 ~~and~~ Eiluned Rees took over from Gwyn Walters as the Secretary. At the following Annual General Meeting, there was a motion to elect an annual president who would be asked give a presidential address to the group at the first meeting of each session. Arthur Johnson was elected the first such President for 1979/80, with an address entitled 'Reprinting Malory's 'Le Morte Darthur' in 1816.' He was followed by Robert Shackleton,

recently retired as Bodley's Librarian, who spoke on 'Starting a bibliography of an 18th century French author.

### **Difficulties and near disaster 1980/1981**

Although the Group had operated successfully for nearly a decade, during 1979 and 1980 there were signs that it was beginning to run out of steam and several other local bibliographical societies formed during the 1960s had already met this fate. Attendances at the regular meetings began to fall and the committee was sometimes faced with the embarrassment of having invited distinguished speakers to travel long distances, only to address small audiences. Two of the proposed summer excursions, to the Old Library Lampeter and to Chester (in conjunction with Liverpool Bibliographical Society) had also had to be cancelled due to lack of support. Furthermore, there was a problem in finding a new secretary to take over from Eiluned Rees once her term in office was due for completion in 1981. Thus, at the AGM for 1980, the Committee proposed to call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group in the New Year 'to discuss and decide upon the proposition that the Society be disbanded.'

This Extraordinary General Meeting was held in Lecture Theatre of CLW on 3 February 1981 attended by only sixteen members. Three possible courses of action were considered: that the group should continue in its present form; that it should be disbanded (in which case a decision would have to be made regarding its finances); or that the terms of reference should be broadened to become a literary society (in which case a new committee would have to be elected). Gwyn Walters, one of the founder members spoke on behalf of the committee. He described the extraordinary reputation the group had achieved in its ten years of existence for its brochure and the high standard of its programmes. Nevertheless, there had been a decline in membership and in the attendance at recent meetings, coupled with the cancellation of excursions for lack of support. There had also been a failure to attract students, Furthermore he spoke of the lack of support by the UCW nor CLW (although individuals from both institutions had been very generous with their time. Daniel Huws of the National Library did not place as much importance on the lack of student membership as did others in the Committee as he considered bibliography to be the pursuit of the middle-aged. He did not think that solution was to turn the group into a literary society and rather proposed that it should be retained with a curtailed programme until enthusiasm revived. In a close vote, nine members present voted in favour of continuing with the group in its present form and seven against.

One further misfortune to befall the Group in 1981 was when the president for that year, David Myrddin Lloyd, (formerly Keeper of Printed Books at the National Library of Scotland) died suddenly during a visit to France in the August. He had been due to deliver the presidential address on 'Sir Walter Scott and Wales' in the October. The gap was filled at the last minute by Donald Moore, Keeper of Pictures and Maps at the National Library, who spoke on 'The imagery of title page and frontispiece'.

## **Rebuilding the fortunes of the Group 1982-1995**

A further business meeting was arranged to precede the lecture on 14 March 1981 when Julia Elton spoke on the subject of 'Glorified grocers: or, behind the scenes in antiquarian bookselling.' There was clearly a need to increase and revitalize the membership, but as result of the defeat of their proposal, Gwyn Walters and ~~other~~ the existing members of the committee felt bound to resign, on principle. However, all concerned retained membership of the Group and offered their continued support to a new generation of office holders who stepped forward to keep the Group in being. Gwyn was elected the president for 1982/1983, in recognition of everything he had done in the early years of the Group and then spoke on 'Bruce Rogers and the art of the book.' Donald Moore took over as Chairman for the 1981/2 session, Rhidian Griffiths (then an Assistant Librarian at NLW) became Secretary and David Gerard (CLW) Treasurer - followed by David Falla (UCW) from 1982/3.

One undoubted strength of the Group and one of the reasons why it was able to overcome the problems of 1981 lay in the dedication of its office holders. Donald Moore would eventually serve more than twenty five years as the Chairman before he handed over to the present occupant in 2006/7. He had a unique ability to sum up any paper that he had just heard and encourage questions from the audience. David Falla would eventually serve for thirty years as Treasurer and oversaw the Group's return to financial stability. His Annual Reports to the AGM were always a joy to hear and his clear handwritten financial statements were models of their kind. He was forced to hand over the present occupant in 2014/5, for health reasons. One of the most demanding jobs, however, was that of Secretary. Rhidian Griffiths served in this capacity for eight years before handing over to Derryn Paul of CLW in 1988/9, who continued until 1995/6. Presidents of the Group during the 1980s included Frank Hogg (1983/1984) and Douglas Ball (1984/5) both from CLW; R. Geraint Gruffydd, former Librarian of the NLW and newly appointed Director of the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, (1985/6); and Brynley F. Roberts, Librarian of the NLW (1986/7). Thereafter the post was discontinued.

The near disbandment of the Group in the spring of 1981 seems to have encouraged all concerned to make extra efforts to take part and ensure its survival. Thus the already planned Weekend Symposium at Gregynog on the subject of antiquarian bookselling and book collection in the September was well-attended and deemed to be a success by all concerned. Likewise, an excursion to see the library of Powis Castle, held in conjunction with the symposium. The periodic exhibitions of interesting bibliographical items owned by members, have always been an important aspect of encouraging the work of the Group. These have been held in the National Library, often accompanied by a booklet in which the contributors are able to explain the significance of what they are exhibiting.

One further attempt to galvanize the membership and maintain links with members from outside who couldn't come to meetings very often was the production of a newsletter for members. An undated note from 1982 or 1983 stated 'No periodical has been produced as yet but the possibility of some kind of publication is under discussion, and a further note stated that 'a book auction and wine and cheese party was held in April to raise money for the Gregynog Symposium.' The newsletter did come to pass, in October 1983, edited by Rhidian Griffiths. Issue No. 4 for January 1987 consisted of seven A4 pages giving news of the group's activities, news of members and former members, notes of publications likely to be

of interest to the membership and some poems. In the days before the widespread use of laser printers, the production was perhaps a little plain compared with modern standards for such productions, but there was substantial and interesting content. No further issues were produced, largely because of the difficulties of securing contributions.

During the mid-1980s there was more of a tendency for the papers presented to the Group to focus on topics relating to Wales than in the previous decade with David Jenkins (formerly Librarian of the NLW) speaking on the 'National Library of Wales a study in history,' in 1982, Robert Davies describing 'The Mervyn Pritchard Collection of early atlases and geographers,' in 1983. Rhidian Griffiths, spoke on the career of George Grant Francis, Antiquary of Swansea,' followed by Brynley Roberts on 'Mr Lhuyd's moving library,' both in 1984. In fact staff of the National Library played an important role in keeping the group afloat at this time. Yet there was always room for fare from those whose interests lay outside Wales. Thus Mansel Davies celebrated the life of the sinologist Dr. Joseph Needham in 1984 and Jeremy Potter spoke of 'Nicolo Zoppino and the Italian Book Market 1503-1544,' in 1986. The map historian, John Moore, spoke of 'John Adair and the Scottish map trade,' and the present author was invited to speak shortly after arriving in the town in 1987, choosing to speak on 'Setting up a private press in 18th century Norfolk.'

A second Gregynog Symposium was held in September 1984 on the theme of 'The art of the book'. Speakers included Geoffrey Wakeman on 'The evolution of colour illustration'; Brian North Lee on 'The development of armorial book-plate styles in Britain'; Mirjam Foot on 'Ten centuries of European pictorial bookbindings'; and Rhidian Griffiths on 'Illustrated sheet music covers'. Eric Gee also spoke of 'The work of Gwasg Gregynog.' Thereafter the periodic symposia became a regular feature of the Group's activities, well attended both by the members and also a band of bibliographers from elsewhere in the UK who looked forward to these periodic meetings of old friends and former colleagues. Later Gregynog Symposia were held in September 1988 on 'Piety, delight or use,' to celebrate the publication the 1588 Bible in Welsh, and in September 1992 on 'The book in Europe.'

In the summer of 1989 the College of Librarianship Wales merged with the University College Wales to become The Department of Information and Library Studies (DILS) of that institution. The increased importance attached to research by the University (and the need to submit to periodic Research Assessment Exercises) began to be reflected in the papers offered to the Group over the next decade by staff and PhD students of the new department. Thus in the 1991/2 session Hywel Roberts spoke of 'Welsh Publishing in America' and Susan Davies on 'The Challenge of Palaeography.' The following year John Turner described the work of the publisher Walter Scott of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Jill Barber spoke of 'Pride and Prejudice in nineteenth-century Cardiganshire.' In the next session Jamie Medhurst considered the attitude of journalists to their information with 'Don't get it right, get it written', and John Harris described 'A hallelujah of a book': How green was my valley as a bestseller.' In the 1995 symposium on the book in Wales, Rheinallt Llwyd spoke of 'The leap forward: developments in the seventeenth century. Patricia Layzell Ward, newly arrived from Perth, Australia in 1996 spoke of 'The place of books in the Swan River Colony 1829-1954.' In 1998 Lucy Tedd on 'The computer and the printed word' and Chris Baggs spoke on 'The miners' institute libraries of South Wales in fact and fiction.' Jean Everitt spoke of 'Co-operative Society libraries: more than just books.' and David Stoker on 'Surveying decrepit Welsh cathedrals: Browne Willis's accounts of St. David's and Llandaff.' both in 1999 and Philip Henry Jones on 'John Dunton's fifty-guinea inspiration,' in 2000.

Other learned institutions, based in Aberystwyth, have provided both members and speakers to the Group over the years. Thus Terry James of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). gave a paper on 'The Rampart Press' in 1983, Stephen Briggs on 'The worldwide publishing activities and ambitions of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of the North (Denmark) 1825-1885,' in 1989 and Gareth Edwards, 'The history of the National Monuments Record of Wales. The Centre of Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies was established in 1985, and there have been papers from R. Geraint Gruffydd, in addition to his presidential address, who spoke on the Welsh Bible of 1588, at the celebrations for its four hundredth anniversary. Other speakers from the centre have included Geraint Jenkins on 'Historical writing in eighteenth century Wales,' in 1996, and Paul Bryant-Quinn on 'Silent Music: editing fifteenth-century Welsh poetry,' in 2000. The Centre's Welsh Dictionary Project inspired a talk by Mary Burdett Jones who spoke on 'Early Welsh dictionaries,' in 1995.

By the time of the 25th Anniversary dinner, held on 20 October 1995, the Group was in good financial shape with well attended meetings, excursions and other activities. It had also by then organised five symposia at Gregynog although administrative changes there meant that sixth had recently been held at the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre, at Maentwrog, near Blaenau Ffestiniog. This was on the theme of 'The book in Wales' and was used as a means of introducing the forthcoming major book of essays, *A nation and its books*, edited by Philip Henry Jones and Eiluned Rees, published by the National Library in association with the Aberystwyth Centre for the Book (a partnership between NLW, DILS, and the Welsh Books Council) in 1998, which contained many contributions by members of the Group.

### **The last twenty years**

The continued success of the group has largely been due to the organising abilities of the present secretary, Timothy Cutts of NLW, who took over from Derryan Paul in 1996, and Lionel Madden, formerly Librarian of the NLW, who took over from Donald Moore as Chairman in 2006/7. As mentioned David Falla continued in office as Treasurer until he retired due to ill-health, in 2014.

The Group has continued to be able to invite distinguished speakers from other parts of the UK to come and address them including Giles Mandelbrote 'John Evelyn and his books,' (2001); Mark Purcell, 'The Libraries of the National Trust,' (2003); Maureen Bell, 'The British Book Trade Index on the Web,' (2004); Henry Summerson, 'A very garden & seed plot': the learning and letters of Wales in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ' (2004); Nicholas Bell, 'My Ladye Nevells booke: the keyboard music of William Byrd,' (2007); Keith Manley, 'Love, blood and teddy bears: twopenny libraries, Parliament and the law in the 1930s (2008); Margaret Escott, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1820-1832: pleasures and pitfalls of producing a work of reference*, ' (2013). Peter Isaac had agreed to address the group in October 2002 but his sudden death in the June created a gap in the programme which was most ably filled by Brenda Scragg who spoke of 'John and Mrs. Rylands as book collectors.' Old friends have sometimes been invited back to offer a paper such as Denis Grogan, who spoke on '"The pencil of nature" early photographically-illustrated books,' in 2009 and Eiluned Rees, who regaled the Group with anecdotes of former colleagues in 'The wonderful world of bibliography,' at the 2013 symposium.



The years 1998-2006 also saw publication of the seven volumes of *Y Llyfr yng Nghymru / Welsh Book Studies*, a bi-lingual academic journal by the Aberystwyth Centre for the Book. Several of the articles in the journal originated as papers given to the Group. On 12 June 2007 the Group held an extra meeting at the National Library to mark the centenary of that institution. Trevor Fishlock was invited to speak of the making of his book *In this place*, published to commemorate the centenary. Present and former Librarians of the NLW have also continued to furnish the Group with speakers. Andrew Green spoke of 'Sir John Ballinger: magician or monster?' in 2001 and 'E-books: here at last?' in 2011. Lionel Madden, spoke of 'The National Library of Wales: towards the millennium,' in 1995 and gave a light-hearted account of his experiences 'In the stacks with Philip Larkin,' at the AGM for 2006.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the Group met in a variety of locations including the Staff House of UCW, the Council Chamber of NLW, the Board Room of CLW and a number of meeting rooms at hotels and restaurants in the town. The choice of venue was determined by a combination of cost, the availability of equipment and the proximity to suitable places to dine afterwards. The use of Powerpoint to illustrate papers and the requisite need for data projectors meant that CLW was increasingly being used for meetings during the 1990s, although its location at Llanbadarn Fawr, remote from restaurants in town meant that it was not ideal. However, since 2003 the Group has often been able to benefit from 'the Drwm', newly created in the National Library which is an ideal location for such meetings.

One of the first speakers to make full use of Powerpoint was Brian Davies who first spoke to the Group on 'Colours for the mediaeval book.' in November 1997. A chemist by profession, he has taken a learned interest in the colours and pigments used in early documents: his stylish and sophisticated presentations have demonstrated how effective this technology can be, and resulted in several further invitations to speak. His paper 'Savage colours,' (2003) was the first to be held in the Drwm. Other members of the Scientific Community in Aberystwyth have made valuable contributions to the work of the Group. The two most recent Treasurers, David Falla and Fred Long, are a physicist and computer scientist respectively and Frank Bott, the retired head of the Computer Science Department, contributed a paper on 'Publishing Joseph Parry's Music,' in 2013.

Another recent successful innovation has been the decision to hold at least one meeting each year on a Saturday morning at the St. Paul's Methodist Centre, accompanied by a cup of coffee, and occasionally a book sale. The attendances at these meeting, often from far afield, have shown that there is an interested potential audience who might have difficulty travelling to Aberystwyth for a Tuesday evening meeting. At the first Saturday meeting Daniel Huws, former Keeper of the Department of Manuscripts at NLW spoke of 'A repertory of Welsh manuscripts and scribes.' Other Saturday speakers have been Thomas Corns, of Bangor University, 'Paradise Lost: the early years' (2012), Peter Lord, 'Welsh art in words: a bibliography of Welsh visual culture,' (2013); Matthew Yeo, 'The place of the second-hand book trade in the history of the book (2014); Geraint Evans, 'Whodunnit?' (2014) and Andrew Prescott on 'Imaging and imagining Magna Carta,' (2015).

At the time of writing this essay in February 2016 the Group has heard ~~in excess of 270~~ 284 papers at its meetings and symposia over its forty-five year history. These have been given by 210 speakers. It has continued to hold annual excursions and has visited every cathedral, castle, stately home and museum within driving distance of Aberystwyth, with some

locations being visited more than once. Five symposia have been held at Gregynog, two at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, Maentwrog (in 1995 and 2001), and one each at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden (2006) and the University of Wales Trinity St. David, Lampeter (2013). Enquiries are being made for another to be held in 2017. The finances of the Group are in good shape and the committee have a number of offers to speak in hand for future programmes.

Membership currently stands at seventy six and attendance at meetings would be the envy of many of our sister organisations in far larger centres of population. All of the other local groups founded during the 1960s and early 1970s have now folded, but the Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group has flourished – largely due to the loyalty of its members, some of whom regularly travel long distances to attend meetings. Two such stalwart regulars, Glyn and Margot Heywood, made the 150 mile round trip from Ludlow for many years and hardly missed a meeting. Without wishing to tempt fate, the Group appears to be well-fitted to face the next forty-five years.

David Stoker

#### **A note on the sources used:**

Much of the correspondence, minutes of the annual general meetings, Secretary's reports, financial papers, lists of members, publicity material and miscellaneous papers relating to symposia between 1976 and 1992 were deposited in the National Library by Rhidian Griffiths in 1989, Derryan Paul in 1992 and Timothy Cutts in 2003. These have all been used together with the complete set of programmes since 1971 and the more recent business papers currently retained by the Secretary. ~~These have all been used, together with a brief essay by~~ Gwyn Walters, ~~which~~ prefaced one of the catalogues of the Members' Exhibitions in late 1970s, ~~with a brief essay~~ entitled 'The origins of the Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group'. However, many gaps in the record still remained which I have attempted to fill by interviewing Gwyn Walters, and Eiluned Rees. I have ~~also~~ had telephone or email discussions with Derryan Paul, Philip Henry Jones, Mary Burdett Jones and Denis Grogan, Rhidian Griffiths and Timothy Cutts. To all of these people, I am most grateful. I have only been able to mention a tiny proportion of the 270 papers within the confines of this essay. I hope those whom I have not mentioned will excuse me.